

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 241715Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4392
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0608

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GY
SUBJECT: US-GOG RELATIONS

REF: GEORGETOWN 0591

SUMMARY: GOG OFFICIALS ARE RESPONDING IN A POSITIVE MANNER TO FONMIN WILLS' FRIENDLY RECEPTION BY SECRETARY VANCE AND OTHER US OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. ACCORDING TO FONMIN WILLS, HIS TRIP AND THE IMPROVEMENT IN US-GOG RELATIONS WERE FAVORABLY COMMENTED ON BY HIS COLLEAGUES DURING CABINET MEETING MARCH 22. SOVIETS REPORTEDLY HAVE NOT INFORMED GOG OF THE RESULTS OF THE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND TRADE STUDY THEY CONDUCTED HERE LAST YEAR. APPARENTLY THEY ARE HOLDING OUT UNTIL GOG AGREES TO GIVE THEM FISHING RIGHTS IN GUYANA'S WATERS AND SOME UNDERSTANDING IS REACHED CONCERNING THE OPPOSITION'S PARTICIPATION IN A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT.
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THE GUYANESE, MEANWHILE, ARE TRYING TO KEEP ALL DOORS TO ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OPEN, AT LEAST UNTIL ALL OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXPLORED. END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN WILLS CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE MARCH 23, APPARENTLY TO GET MY OPINION ON HOW MY MEETING WITH BURNHAM ON MARCH 21 HAD BEEN AND TO DESCRIBE GOG CABINET'S REACTION TO THE NEWS

THAT WORK ON THE GEORGETOWN ROAD PROJECT WOULD PROCEED.

2. UPON MY ARRIVAL IN HIS OFFICE, WILLS QUERIED ME CONCERNING MY IMPRESSION OF THE MEETING WITH BURNHAM. I RESPONDED THAT IT WENT WELL IN MY VIEW AND RELATED SOME OF THE DETAILS. HE THEN SAID THAT BURNHAM HAD MENTIONED IT FAVORABLY IN CABINET MEETING MARCH 22. ALSO, THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS HAD REPORTED HIS MEETING WITH ME AND ACTING AID DIRECTOR ON MONDAY, MARCH 21, AND DESCRIBED THE FORMULA WHICH HAD BEEN SUGGESTED FOR PROCEEDING WITH THE GEORGETOWN STREET AND ROAD PROJECT. WILLS SAID CABINET MEMBERS WERE PLEASED OVER THE NEWS.

3. DESMOND HOYTE, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHO HAD BEEN ANGRY AT THE US SINCE LAST FALL, CHARACTERIZED THE US WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED WITH THE ROAD PROJECT, COUPLED WITH WILLS' RECEPTION IN WASHINGTON BY SECRETARY VANCE AS SIGNALS OF A TOTALLY NEW ATTITUDE BY THE UNITED STATES TOWARD GUYANA AND AS EVIDENCE OF THE SUCCESS OF WILLS' DIPLOMACY. WILLS COMMENTED TO ME THAT HE HAD BEEN PLEASANTLY SURPRISED BY HOYTE'S CHANGE OF ATTITUDE ABOUT THE UNITED STATES AND TAKEN ABACK BY HOYTE'S POSITIVE WORDS ABOUT HIM.

4. I ASKED WILLS WHAT BURNHAM HAD MEANT WHEN HE SAID THAT HE WAS HAVING TROUBLES WITH THE SOVIETS (REFTEL). WILLS REPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT REVEAL TO GUYANA THE RESULTS OF THEIR ECONOMIC AND TRADE STUDY WHICH HAD BEEN MADE LAST OCTOBER. THE GUYANESE HAD OFFERED TO SEND AN OFFICIAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO THE USSR
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TO DISCUSS THE STUDY BUT THE SOVIETS HAD RESPONDED IT WOULD NOT BE CONVENIENT. HE SAID THEY APPEARED TO BE HOLDING OUT UNTIL GUYANA AGREED TO GIVE THEM FISHING RIGHTS WITHIN ITS WATERS AND AGREED TO CREATE A NATIONAL FRONT GOVERNMENT INCLUDING CHEDDI JAGAN. THE SOVIETS HAD NOT SAID THIS DIRECTLY BUT, HE SAID, THE MESSAGE WAS OBVIOUS. IF AN ACCOMMODATION WITH JAGAN WERE IN FACT TO BE MADE, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE PRIOR TO THE AUTUMN SUGAR HARVEST. (A STRIKE BY THE JAGAN-CONTROLLED UNIONS COULD PARALYZE THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.) OTHER THAN TO REAFFIRM THAT THE GOG HAD NO INTENTION OF "SHARING POWER" WITH JAGAN, WILLS DID NOT ELABORATE FURTHER ON THIS.

5. COMMENT: THE GOG, HAVING TRIED TO OBTAIN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE SOVIETS DURING THE PAST YEAR, MAY BE GETTING WEARY OF THEIR INSISTENCE UPON IMPOSING POLITICAL CONDITIONS ON ANY ASSISTANCE OFFERED. SOME GOG LEADERS APPEAR ALSO TO WANT TO REMAIN TRULY NON-ALIGNED. THEY APPEAR TO BE READY AGAIN TO KNOCK ON THE WEST'S DOORS

FOR ASSISTANCE BUT ARE RELUCTANT TO LOSE POSSIBLE
ASSISTANCE FROM THE SOVIETS WHILE COURTING THE US.
OBSTACLES IMPEDING ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE GOOD RELATIONS
WITH THE US INCLUDE JAGAN'S BACKING, ALBIET LUKEWARM,
BY THE EAST INDIAN COMMUNITY, HIS CONTROL OVER THE
SUGAR WORKERS UNION, AND THE FACT THAT HE APPEARS TO BE THE
KEY TO ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR GUYANA FROM THE SOVIET
UNION. THE GOG IS ATTEMPTING TO WALK A ZIG-ZAG LINE
BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BUT MAINTAINING A BALANCE WILL BE
DIFFICULT.
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